



Are We Out of the Woods Yet?

Students' Perceived Values of Outdoor Pre-Orientation Program Experiences Over Time

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the perceptions of the value of Camp Blue among students 1-4 years post-program?
What experiences at Camp Blue yielded the most positive evaluations?

BACKGROUND

Challenging environments foster student growth

Easier transition to college life

Pre-Orientation Program Outcomes:
personal development, increases in self-efficacy, and increased retention after the first year

"I gained confidence, and learning to be yourself, and I don't know that I would have gotten that otherwise."
Camp Blue Camper

"In high school I always wanted to be the leader but there were other people on my [Camp Blue] team that were challenging me that I'd never seen before, like I'd never been challenged for leadership in high school."
Camp Blue Camper

"I think the main takeaway that turned into a skill for me was just realizing that, in coming to college, I was going to be encountering people that came from diverse backgrounds and had a lot of different life experiences from me."
Camp Blue Camper

Friendship & Socialization

Leadership Skills

Confidence

Stepping Outside Comfort Zone

Diversity

FINDINGS

FUTURE ACTIONS & IMPLICATIONS

PROFESSIONALS

Student Staff Training
Trends & Research
Institutional Values & Mission

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Physical & Mental Challenges
Socializing with Peers
Observing Student Leadership

ABSTRACT

Often the first welcome to university life for students comes in the form of an orientation program. Pre-orientation camps, like Camp Blue at the University of Dayton, serve to ease the transition through a leadership development lens. The purpose of this research is to examine the effects of the Camp Blue leadership lessons over time, assessing students' perceived value of their camp experiences. A focus group comprised of six former campers, representing first-year through senior students, highlights some key themes and characteristics from the camp experience that remain relevant post-program. This study informs future practices for camp curriculum and activities, and assists orientation professionals in developing effective pre or extended orientation programs for new students.

METHODS

- Phenomenological research
- Focus group of 6 former Camp Blue campers (2012-2015)

SELECT REFERENCES

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